

UPDATE

The Facts About Smoking

FACT: A pack-a-day smoker puffs 7,500 cigarettes per year, taking about 75,000 smoke-filled breaths and it costs this country dearly.

FACT: Smoking-related diseases claim an estimated 440,000 American lives each year, including those affected indirectly, such as babies born prematurely due to prenatal maternal smoking and some of the victims of "secondhand" exposure to tobacco's carcinogens. Smoking costs the United States approximately \$150 billion each year in health-care costs and lost productivity. (American Lung Association)

FACT: Cigarettes contain at least 43 distinct cancer-causing chemicals. Smoking is directly responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer cases and causes most cases of emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Smoking is also a major factor in coronary heart disease and stroke; may be causally related to malignancies in other parts of the body; and has been linked to a variety of other conditions and disorders, including slowed healing of wounds, infertility, and peptic ulcer disease. (American Lung Association)

FACT: Nicotine is an addictive drug, which when inhaled in cigarette smoke reaches the brain faster than drugs that enter the body intravenously. Smokers become not only physically addicted to nicotine; they also link smoking with many social activities, making smoking a difficult habit to break. (American Lung Association)

FACT: Successful ex-smokers usually try to quit several times before achieving their goal. When a smoker decides to try quitting, here is what happens inside of that smoker's body within hours, days, weeks, months and years following that last cigarette:

- After 24 hours, blood levels of carbon monoxide drop to a non-smokers level, providing increased oxygen supply to the body and the risk of heart attack decreases.
- After 48 hours, sense of smell and taste improves.
- After two to twelve weeks, lung function increases up to 30 percent.
- After one to nine months, sinus congestion, coughing, shortness of breath and fatigue decrease.
- After five years, risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, and esophagus decreases by 50 percent compared to continuing smokers.
- After 10 years, death rates due to lung cancer decrease by 50 percent compared to continuing smokers. (Source American Cancer Society. When Smokers Quit. 1996.)



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South Carolina Budget and Control Board
Employee Insurance Program
December 2003

